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STAFF NOTES

March 14, 1959

Governor Herter, acting Secretary of State, came in to consult with the President about the latest note from Harold Macmillan, and about a message sent from the Foreign Secretary to the Acting Secretary of State through the British Ambassador. (Governor Herter commented that it was a curious way of transmitting a very important document considering the fact that the Prime Minister always uses the direct channel of access to the President). General Goodpaster sat in on meeting.

Re: recess of disarmament talks. We accept the date of the 20th and each government should so instruct its delegation. In passing it was noted that Dr. Killian has some recent reports on underground testing which he is now having evaluated and that they will be shown to Mr. Macmillan when he is here. The President said it was impossible to expect 100% perfection in a system for detection of tests; what we are looking for is a system that both sides would respect.

Two principal points were discussed. (1). Macmillan's suggestion that the working group in Paris cease work on reply to Soviet note until Macmillan has seen the President. Governor Herter pointed out that it was at the British request that we first began to submit draft of answers to the allies for their consideration; further that it was also at the British request that we began to submit them to the working group in Paris. It was stressed that the language, to which Macmillan is now objecting (regarding Foreign Minister's meeting) is the exact language used in the communique that he and Khrushchev issued at the termination of Macmillan's visit to Moscow.

The President thought we should say that we had submitted our paper to the working group and felt that was the only way views could be concerted. While the President, it is true, will see Macmillan, he will have no way of knowing the views of the other allies. He said we could not agree to the principle of stopping quadripartite discussions -- our position paper is in Paris -- we have assumed that others have done so.

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The second principal point was date of the proposed Summit meeting. The President said we were amenable to any time when we could see "progress" (though he admitted that was an almost undefinable term. He thought the most we could expect in terms of progress from Foreign Ministers was that they would define the areas of agreement and particularly the points of difference which the Heads of Government would have to negotiate.

Other matters discussed:

1. Macmillan's and De Gaulle's reports of their meeting in Paris vary considerably. In this morning's papers there is a glowing account of the meeting of Macmillan with Adenauer, and it remains to be seen if Adenauer will write a dissenting report in a day or two.
2. The President feels that there is something behind all this, even more than Macmillan's political ambitions and his forthcoming election. It was noted that the notes received from Macmillan and those from Lloyd are considerably different in tone. The President did not quite put his finger on what he feels lies behind Macmillan's maneuvers.
3. The President said that the British constantly lose sight of the difficulties of a President in leaving this country. In this latest message Macmillan speaks of a "series" of conferences. In passing the President said the Treaty of Versailles was a tragic mistake despite the fact that Germany was at that time a defeated nation. He said that the difficulty of negotiating a "peace" treaty with a Nation (Russia) that is strong and growing and independent are even harder -- practicably insoluble.
4. As for the date of the summit meeting, the President said we would be amenable when we can see "progress" whenever that might be. He has a hunch that Congress, despite the fact this is a non-election year, may adjourn earlier than expected.
5. The President suggested throwing a hint, not a threat, to Macmillan, to the effect that Macmillan has had an opportunity to meet with Khrushchev, but that he, the President, has not.

In conclusion the President suggested a "real snarl" on the matter of the working group, and a "jolt" on the implied hint about Khrushchev.

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